

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF JENNIFER ANN ABRUZZO

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, later today, the Senate will vote on President Biden's nominee to serve as general counsel for the National Labor Relations Board.

There actually shouldn't be a vacancy in this position. When President Biden took office, the person serving as the NLRB's top lawyer was still in the middle of a term to which the Senate had confirmed him. He was doing his job, serving the country, and had no intention to skip out of his responsibilities early.

But less than 30 minutes after pledging to heal and unify the country in his inaugural address, President Biden broke precedent and threatened to fire Peter Robb unless he resigned prematurely that very day.

At the very first instant that the new President's statements about norms, institutions, and governance ran up against the demands of the far left—well, the decision didn't take very long. Where Senate confirmation and fixed terms were supposed to create independence, this administration just wanted partisan loyalty.

Unfortunately, this was not an isolated incident. It has actually been a pattern. This small world of independent agencies has offered us actually a case study in the gap between the administration's unifying rhetoric on the one hand and its divisive actions on the other.

Back in March, the Biden administration took aim at another Senate-confirmed official, the general counsel for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. This time, a full 2 years before her term was set to expire. Sharon Gustafson had been engaged in important work, particularly in defense of religious freedom in the workplace. But the President didn't want to wait for our system to play out properly. He broke with norms and he fired her.

Just this month, we witnessed the firing of Andrew Saul, the head of the Social Security Administration. Listen to this. He was just 2 years into a 6-year term. Mr. Saul had kept a critical agency functioning through a historically challenging year. He was not some partisan hack. We are talking about someone the Senate confirmed with 77 votes—77 votes—a bipartisan supermajority for Mr. Saul.

But powerful liberal interests got the President's ear. They wanted their own hand-picked insider. Norms and precedents had to go out the window. Now,

the American people deserve to trust in the independence of crucial watchdog agencies like these, but with these firings, this administration has instead decided to explore frontiers in partisan hardball.

We just spent years listening to the left and the media express outrage over personnel decisions and dismissals, many of which amounted to a heck of a lot less than the three I just mentioned.

VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, later today, the Senate is set to do some bipartisan legislating.

Back in 1984, Congress passed a Victims of Crime Act, which includes an important Federal program called a Crime Victims Fund. When criminals who commit Federal crimes are charged fines and penalties, some of that money flows into this fund. It goes to State-level programs that help crime victims with services, like counseling and emergency shelters. It also helps compensate the victims directly with their expenses, like medical costs, mental health, funeral expenses, and lost wages. Some of the money also goes specifically to fight child abuse.

This fund needs to rest on firm financial footing, but right now it doesn't have that firm footing. Its balance has been shrinking fast. Congress needs to act to prevent big cuts to victims' services, particularly in rural areas.

A number of Senators on both sides have come together and produced bipartisan reforms that will strengthen the program and keep assistance flowing to the survivors of Federal crimes.

The junior Senator from Pennsylvania has a further amendment to make sure the program can't be used as part of budgetary shell games that deliberately cloud Federal accounting. I will support both Senator TOOMEY's amendment and our colleagues' legislation later today.

But on this subject, for goodness' sake, elected officials should not just be racing to replenish the Crime Victims Fund before it runs out. Leaders at local, State, and Federal levels should be acting to confront the surge in violent crime that is plaguing our Nation.

For about a year now, the political left has grown obsessed with the notion that police officers are inherently bad, policing is inherently evil, and what vulnerable neighborhoods really need is less enforcement of the laws.

As one House Member has informed us:

Defunding police means defunding police.

Another put it this way:

Defunding the police isn't radical, it is real.

Well, academic research has confirmed something troubling. The broad anti-police backlash that sometimes follows high-profile, police-involved in-

cidents subsequently leads to less safety, more crime, and more murders. Sure enough, murders have shot up in cities and communities all across our country.

My hometown of Louisville has seen 66 percent more homicides than we had seen by this time last year—66 percent more. Last year was a record year for carjackings and yet Louisville is on pace to match it once again. The city's police department is short more than 200 sworn officers due to low recruitment, low morale, and resignations.

Leaders should be working to contain this damage, but instead of delivering a sober, responsible message, many of the most prominent Democratic politicians instead grabbed their megaphones and amplified the anti-police sentiment as loud as possible.

As I have noted before, attacking and insulting the police is not just a bad strategy for public safety across the board; the data shows it is an especially disruptive approach to advancing racial justice.

The truth is this:

Larger police forces save lives and the lives saved are disproportionately Black lives.

That is another expert study.

So I am glad the Senate will take the important step today of reforming and strengthening the Crime Victims Fund. It certainly belies any notion that we can't legislate in a bipartisan way. We absolutely can and we do. When a bipartisan outcome is what the Democratic majority leader truly wants, it actually makes it possible.

But I wish anti-crime, pro-police, pro-public safety attitudes and policies could be just as bipartisan at the State, local, and Federal levels as today's vote will likely be. Standing up for law enforcement and the innocent people they protect should never be limited to one side of the aisle.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kenneth Allen Polite, Jr., of Louisiana, to be an Assistant Attorney General.